

Book Review

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Basil Germond, *The Maritime Dimension Of European Security: Seapower And The European Union*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, 248 pp., 68 £, ISBN 1137017813, 9781137017819

The maritime security of Europe has been in the limelight in the recent past. One of the major contemporary challenges that the EU faces, particularly this year, is illegal immigration via the sea. Thousands of migrants from Asia and Africa are fleeing due to conflict and instability to Europe in search of better livelihoods and safety. With land and air borders strictly controlled, migrants are risking their lives to cross over to Europe via the less regulated maritime domain, particularly the Mediterranean Sea. Against this backdrop, Basil Germond's book on the maritime security of Europe has been released at a relevant time, as the EU as a regional actor needs to collectively tackle its increasingly notable maritime security challenges, which are predominantly non-traditional.

The book highlights the importance and role of seapower in the 21st century, and contextualises the development of European seapower within it. While underlining the continuation of the traditional vitality of the sea for states, such as its use for communication and transportation, and in projecting regional and global power, the book also examines the contemporary maritime security threats and issues faced by states and the

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EU. These include piracy, maritime terrorism, illegal immigration, smuggling, energy sea-bed mining and marine environment protection.

The author introduces the subject, the specific terms and the actors in it before undertaking a detailed analysis. The book begins by contextualising the importance of the seas for national security, then looks at the discourses and geopolitics of maritime power, and goes on to streamline the themes and challenges for the EU. The author maps out the various agencies and policies of the EU that equip it to deal with these challenges and goes on to give his recommendations.

Germond stresses the imperial and grand historical connotations of naval powers, and brilliantly links this to the contemporary European discourse in using the sea as a vector of projecting power materially and ideationally. This “geo-strategy” has two components – while on the one hand, the promotion of “European” values and ideas, such as democracy, human rights, free market and rule of law to zones of influence beyond its borders, and on the other, “fortress Europe”, making it impenetrable for outsiders. This two-pronged discourse sits squarely on the migration debates within the EU. While projecting itself as a zone of stability and equality, it does not, however, want the influx of migrants that it thus attracts.

This is in contrast to the fluidity of movement within the EU, which the author mentions, but does not deconstruct. It is in sections like this, which demand analysis beyond the narrow lens of maritime security, that one notices the limited scope of the book, which has perhaps restricted the author from giving more nuanced and well-balanced insights. Likewise, the discussion on transnational non-state threats such as piracy, smuggling and trafficking, illegal narcotics and maritime terrorism cannot be concluded by merely securitising them, and creating a symbolic precautionary European fortress against these threats, or even spatialising them to other continents: the related issues of governance and development have to be analysed as well, as their consequences are intricately linked to the maritime threats for the EU.

The book extensively covers various aspects of maritime dimensions of the EU as an actor. The author has also culled out maritime elements to agencies and policies which might not have direct maritime concerns, such as the European Space Agency (ESA), European Environmental Agency (EEA) and the European Defence Agency (EDA). The author has made excellent suggestions and explored possibilities towards the optimisation and common use of available resources, and made suggestions for resource sharing, cutting across various policies and involving organisations of the EU such as the Common Information Sharing Environment (CISE), Common Security and

Defence Policy (CSDP), EU Military Staff, EU Military Committee, European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) and European Maritime Safety Agency, as laid out in the EU's Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP). The book also traces the development and shaping of the EU's maritime dimension – ultimately directing the discussion towards the new maritime doctrine of the European Commission, adopted last year, i.e. the EU Maritime Security Strategy (EU MSS), which explicitly outlines the policies pertaining to maritime-related challenges that affect the member states' national security, economic security, human security and environmental security.

The author has also spent considerable space comparing the EU with North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in terms of their naval mandates, actions and operations. He also recommends the interaction of forces of the two organisations, which have many common elements, but at the same time warns against overlapping of their work. He recommends the division of functions between the two: NATO as hard power and EU as low-intensity, non-traditional military power, in their zones of operations and influence.

He focuses on enhancing energy security through the seas, the protection of the marine environment and the economic potential of fisheries. The book also examines the case of Europe's maritime frontiers, the Arctic Ocean, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Baltic Sea, to explore their untapped economic potential. Germond's engagement with the EU's Blue Growth strategy – sea-bed mining, ocean energy, marine environment and fisheries – is primarily in terms of its components' economic value. The extent of their protection or exploitation is driven by economic and security interests of the EU. However, the associated environmental risks and the impact of EU policies on these issues have not been analysed satisfactorily. Furthermore, even though the book mentions sustainable development, and it is well within the scope of the book to explore the securitisation of environment, the author does not delve into that domain.

The author's understanding of security is guided heavily by economic motivations, which are revealed in his analysis of and recommendations for the EU's strategies and response for various challenges. Secondly, since it is oriented towards the state (and the EU), the book primarily focuses on the legal aspect of the various domains it delves into.

By focusing on the EU as a single actor, and not looking at its constituent states, the book delimits the scope of discussion. This helps to successfully maintain the continuity of the theme, but at times the EU needs to be deconstructed to understand when

and why certain policies are better implemented than others, and in which areas there is political willingness and consensus. It is also important to look at this aspect because the themes and analysis in the book hint that the book is primarily written for researchers, governments, policy-makers, bureaucrats and armed forces, the navy in particular.

Another point to be noted is that the book discusses the issue of illegal migration via sea at the same wavelength as other serious transnational criminal activities such as narcotics smuggling and terrorism at sea. The humanitarian nature of the problem and its context is not taken into account. While the author has engaged intermittently with the literature on human rights, he does not really articulate that perspective in his analysis.

One possible area within the scope of this book which the author could have looked at in further detail is the element of search and rescue (SAR). With the drastic increase in illegal migration via sea, particularly the Mediterranean Sea which is Europe's frontier to parts of Asia and Africa, and the consequent increase in the number of deaths and lives risked at sea, SAR forms a crucial element in the maritime dimension of European security.

The book was published in May 2015, a time when a migration crisis was unfolding in the Mediterranean Sea, giving the EU an unprecedented influx of immigrants. Hence, the book, although a very exhaustive and relevant read, could not deal with these burning new developments, which are at present a priority in the EU's maritime policy for the foreseeable future.